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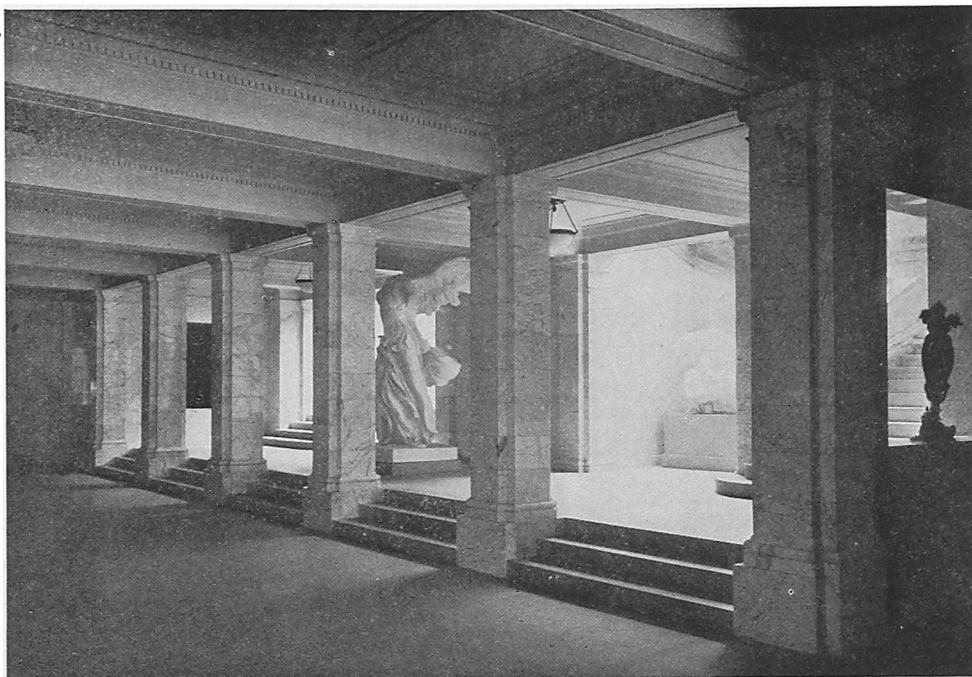
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GROUND FLOOR FOYER—CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
Hubbell & Benes, Architects

The Cleveland Museum of Art

By I. T. FRARY

(Text and Engravings courtesy of The Architectural Record)

THERE has been thrown open to the public in the city of Cleveland a new structure to house the collections of the Cleveland Museum of Art. The beauty of its design, the completeness of its equipment and the convenience of its arrangement have attracted widespread attention from those interested in buildings of this character, and representatives from the staffs of the leading art museums of the country, who were present at the formal opening, expressed the opinion that nowhere had they seen a building more perfectly adapted to its requirements.

This museum owes its existence primarily to the munificence of three of Cleveland's public spirited citizens, John Huntington, Horace Kelly and Hinman B. Hurlbut, who, about two decades ago, requeathed what were at that time large sums of money for the purpose of establishing and maintaining art collections and art instruction for the benefit of

the public. The varying conditions under which these bequests were left made it seem for a time that it would be impossible to combine them; and as no one of them was individually large enough to build and equip a structure suited to the size of the city, the funds were allowed to accumulate while means were being devised by which they could be united.

Meanwhile, in order that no time might be lost when the question of finances finally should be solved, the firm of Hubbell and Benes was appointed to prepare plans for the proposed building. In this work they were assisted by consultation with Mr. Henry W. Kent of the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and the late Edmund B. Wheelwright of Boston. Nine years were spent in studying the various problems involved and many changes in location, plan, material and design were made before the final drawings were ap-



SOUTH FRONT—CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
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proved. A tract of land in Wade Park, affording a magnificent setting for the building, was donated by Mr. J. H. Wade, sufficient ground being provided to accommodate any future additions to the building. Finally, on May 20, 1915, the excavation was started and on June 6, 1916, the new building was formally opened to the public.

The build occupies a site overlooking the lake in Wade Park, and the slope to the water is of sufficient extent to provide ample opportunity for a monumental forecourt, with fountain, lagoon and formal garden, which, when completed, will add greatly to the already beautiful setting, the charm of which is due in a large degree to the many trees with which it is surrounded.

The building itself, which is three hundred feet long by one hundred and twenty feet wide, is of white Georgia marble and stands on a low balustraded terrace. The south or main front is of extreme simplicity, broken in plan only by the entrance portico and the slight projection of the end pavilions. Great restraint has been shown in the use of ornament, the only enrichment, aside from the strictly architectural features incident to the use of the Ionic order, being two low relief panels between the engaged columns of the end pavilions. Inasmuch as this side of the building is occupied by the large top-lighted galleries, the wall above the basement is pierced only by the main doorway. The other three sides, however, are broken by the fenestration of the side-lighted galleries; and on the north facade the effect of an additional story is produced by omitting the terrace in order to get entrances on the ground floor level.

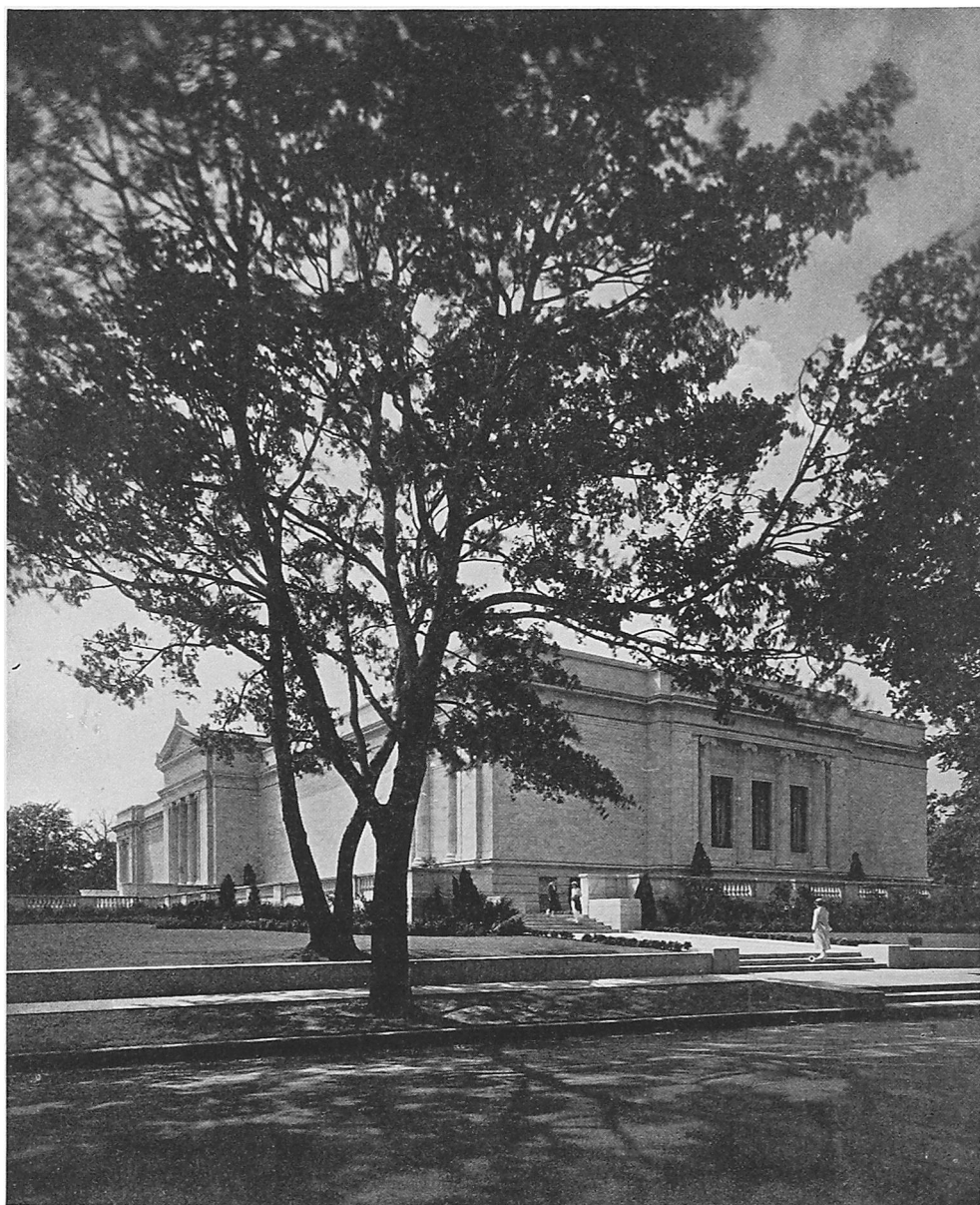
In laying out the plans of such a building, it is obvious that the most important factors to be taken into consideration are, first, to have the arrangement such as to provide for the comfort and to facilitate the movement of the throngs of visitors that will pass through it; and, second, to provide an effective and complete equipment for the working staff, upon whose efficiency depends the usefulness and attractiveness of the institution.

From the main entrance one passes through

the lobby to the rotunda, from which, on either side, open large rectangular courts. Entirely surrounding this central group are the exhibition galleries. Check room, catalogue counter and telephone booths have been located, of course, near the main entrance; and the galleries are so arranged as to provide natural and logical circuits, thus preventing confusion, while on the other hand numerous openings are placed so as to make all portions of the exhibition space intercommunicating where possible, thus obviating the necessity for following lengthy circuits in passing from one section to another.

The rotunda contains examples of classic art. The east court is called the Court of Tapestries and Metal-Work, because of the tapestries which hang upon its walls and the collection of armor which it houses. The west court is a novel feature, being laid out as a garden with a fountain, walks, flowers and shrubbery, intermingled with examples of architectural sculpture, some of which (as they are secured in the future) will be let into the walls. The walls are of brick, devoid of ornamentation; and the court is intended by its very simplicity to provide a place of retirement, where the visitor suffering from what has been termed aptly "museum fag" can get away from exhibits and relax the mental tension incident to a study of, or even a casual view of a museum. The remaining rooms are devoted to the various collections which, though as yet comparatively small, have been carefully selected to cover as thoroughly as possible the various fields and epochs of art. In addition to the permanent collections, the inaugural exhibition has been materially enriched by the presence of valuable loans, effectually rounding out sections which otherwise might have been meager.

Aside from the function of providing public exhibitions, an extensive program of educational features has been planned by the director, Mr. Frederic Allen Whiting, provision for which is found in the lecture hall, library, small photograph and lecture room, children's room, conference room and print room on the ground floor, and some special



VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST—CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
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exhibition rooms on the second floor. The work for children is to be a prominent feature and is to be carried on through co-operation with the art supervisors of the public schools.

On the ground floor are located toilet rooms, rest room, lunch rooms and additional check rooms and telephone service. The western portion of the ground floor is

devoted to the department of administration and maintenance. The administration offices are located so as to be readily accessible both to the public and to the other departments, while at the same time they are so shut away as not to be in evidence to visitors. Especial care has been taken to plan the official quarters so that, whatever the future expansion of the museum, the

offices will always be maintained in their present location. To any one who has endeavored to locate the various officials in some of the large museums, the wisdom of a compact grouping of administrative departments will be thoroughly appreciated. The maintenance department, which is the workshop of the institution, has a separate service entrance at the northwest corner for receiving and shipping packages and for the entrance of employees and business callers. As the superintendent's office is located beside this door, all persons and articles entering the department are subject to his inspection. A receiving room provides space for packing and unpacking exhibits, and directly adjoining this is a large storage vault, where are kept such articles as are not for the time being on exhibition. Here has been installed a most ingenious arrangement for storing pictures. A series of vertical, sliding metal frames the height of the room are placed at right angles to the wall. These frames are covered with a heavy wire netting, upon which are hung the pictures which are to be stored. Being placed side by side, and hanging from an overhead track which permits of their being drawn forward easily like the drying racks in a laundry, the frames occupy a minimum of space, and yet the pictures upon them are as accessible as though hung upon the walls of a room. Each frame is numbered, so it is a simple matter to locate any picture in storage by referring to the office records. Inasmuch as this room is well lighted and easily accessible, all the pictures kept here are available for inspection at any time. This simple solution of the storage problem, which was studied out by members of the museum staff, has attracted most favorable comment from visiting museum officials. Close by the storage room is a small shop where various jobs of construction and repair are taken care of.

On the second floor are located the printing office and photographer's rooms. A freight elevator facilitates the handling of exhibits, and the photographic studio is placed in close proximity, so that new exhibits can be taken directly to it from the receiving room.

Every precaution has been taken to protect

the building and contents from destructive agencies by the control of temperature and humidity, by the elimination of atmospheric impurities and by the installation of such features as steam pipes on the roof to melt snow, a device for draining off condensation from the under side of skylights and the protection of the central dome by a metal casing. A novel system of sprinklers has been installed above the skylights, by means of which the glass can be washed at will, while the spray of water can be used during hot weather as a means of controlling the temperature in the rooms beneath.

Perhaps the most original and interesting feature of the equipment is the lighting system used in the top-lighted galleries. Many difficulties are encountered in controlling this type of illumination, among which are the tendency to an excess of light on floor and ceiling, with a corresponding lack on the walls; where the light is most obviously required; the reflection in glazed pictures of brilliantly lighted portions of the room; and the loss of effect in many works of art, due to the lack of a pure daylight quality in the illumination, especially in the artificial light. There is also the element of direct sunlight to be provided against, which is usually controlled by means of sliding shades, which are awkward, unsatisfactory in effect and moreover perishable; architectural features rising above the light will frequently cast undesirable shadows upon the skylight; and the artificial lighting is often objectionable because of a lack of diffusion and the too evident brightness of the light sources. In order to study these problems satisfactorily a scale model of one of the galleries was constructed and in this an exhaustive series of experiments was carried on, supplemented by observations in other museums.

In the decorative treatment of the exhibition galleries a most commendable restraint is evident. With but one exception, the walls and ceilings are of the simplest, both in design and in color, the logical principle having been followed that the rooms are intended for the display of pictures and other works of art, not for decorative effects.